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SUBJECT: BORDER ACTIVITY UPDATE: CUSTOMS, BORDER STRUCTURES, AND  
TRAINING

REF: Kabul 101

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Effective control of its borders is critical to Afghanistan's security and economic prosperity. The Embassy's Border Management Task Force (BMTF) plays a significant role in building Afghan capacity to manage its borders, creating institutions for coordinating border plans; harmonizing international projects; and putting bricks and mortar on the ground at strategic border crossings. Among its major achievements of the past six months are:

- a) Establishment, together with other donors, of the Afghan National Customs Academy.
- b) Improvements and mentors at major border crossing points.
- c) Maintenance of and training in the use of scanning and sensing equipment at the Kabul and Kandahar Airports and numerous border crossings.
- d) Provision of trainers and mentors near Shebregan, Spin Boldak, Jalalabad, and Herat to support the Border Police and larger U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Better control of Afghanistan's borders is critical to stabilization of Afghanistan's security and to long-term economic sustainability. The constant flow of narcotics, weapons, and undocumented people undermine the efforts of the coalition to cut off material support to insurgents. Ramshackle facilities and untrained officials hinder licit commerce and result in lost customs duties and fees - the primary source of GIROA tax revenue. The lack of effective modern border management procedures and transparency, moreover, fosters an environment for corruption.

3. (SBU) BMTF, led by DHS Customs and Border Patrol officials, is focused on assisting the GIROA to improve its border management capabilities to improve processing of licit movements of goods and people, to interdict illicit movements, and to improve revenue collection. It advises Afghan border officials (customs officials and border police) both on policy and operations. BMTF supports a robust mentor program at two border crossings, Islam Qalah on the Iranian border and Torkham Gate on the Pakistan border; and it intends to expand the program, increasing the number of mentors at Torkham and Islam Qalah and putting new mentors at Weesh Chaman this year. (NOTE: Mentor operations at Islam Qalah were temporarily suspended, and all Islam Qalah mentors were deployed at Torkham Gate because of ISAF traffic through there. They will return to Islam Qalah soon END NOTE). BMTF played a lead role in September 2009 in

creating the Border Issues Working Group (BIWG) to bring together U.S. Embassy, ISAF, GIROA and other donors involved in customs, immigration, and other border issues to ensure that all coordinate. It is also active with GIROA customs officials and other donors in the Informal Customs Network in coordinating donor assistance specifically focused on support of customs capacity building and operations.

14. (SBU) The BMTF and Department of Homeland security (DHS) are on track to add a DHS attach and additional mentors in Balkh, Herat, and Nangahar Province. The tactical work of BMTF compliments parallel policy discussions in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) talks and the Dubai Process, and improvements in border management will contribute to trade facilitation once the APTTA is agreed. Successful border operations will be a key to fast tracking supplies for NATO forces; generating customs revenue for GIROA; and stemming the flow of narcotics and weapons.

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Afghan National Customs Academy  
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15. (SBU) U.S Coordinating Director for Economic and Development Affairs Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne and Canadian Ambassador William Crosbie joined Minister of Finance H.E. Dr. Omar Zakhilwal January 19 to open the Afghan National Customs Academy (ANCA), Afghanistan's first central customs training institution. The ANCA will train 150 to 200 recruits over the course of 12 months on customs practices. At the same time, four Afghan trainers will participate in a train-the-trainer program so that Afghans can train Afghans to ensure that the ANCA will remain operational and sustainable over the long term.

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16. (SBU) The Academy grew out of the Canada-led Dubai Process, a confidence building forum for Pakistan and Afghanistan designed to bring together officials from both countries at an informal, working level (reftel). The coordination and implementation of the academy was worked through the Informal Customs Network. The U.S. and Canada will fund and staff the first three years of instruction. The USG is providing \$2.5 million of funding annually, which will include operational support for the Academy, the dean of the Academy, five trainers, and curriculum development. This is in addition to the approximately \$2 million which the United States contributed to the construction and renovation to the training facilities. Canada has developed tailored training materials that will be used in the academy's curriculum and has also provided a deputy dean and a senior trainer who will work with recruits and officials.

17. (SBU) During this period, the Academy will share the facilities of the Afghan Counternarcotics Training Academy. The European Community has already committed to fund a new facility designed specifically for the Customs Academy. The BMTF, in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers' Afghan Engineering Division, have the ground knowledge and capabilities to make it a natural agent to design and build the Academy.

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Improvements at Border Crossing Points  
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18. (SBU) The BMTF is targeting capacity and material development for Afghanistan's major borders. The Kandahar-Weesh-Chaman-Quetta link is an essential corridor for supplying ISAF activities in the south and for facilitating a commercial and trade corridor. Current plans call for ground breaking on \$20 million worth of facility upgrades and training to increase security and expedite the movement of goods and people by August 2010. BMTF has already worked with GIROA to identify a 100 square kilometer site, and President Karzai is expected to sign the decree soon transferring the land to the Ministry of Finance so that building can begin this summer. The Government of Canada will support the GIROA to help prepare the site by compensating and transplanting the current residents and

improving some of the extant public buildings there. Warehouse and barracks facilities at the Islam Qalah facility, in the west, should be completed by March 2010. BMTF is also managing improvements at the Kabul Inland Customs Depot. Upgrades include two new warehouses and the refurbishment of six others. Work should be completed by January 2010.

¶9. (SBU) The busy Torkham border crossing which links Kabul and Jalalabad to Peshawar is a testing ground for developing model border operations. Border activities should increase revenue and prevent contraband smuggling. BMTF is adding mentors for Afghan border officials on the border, and ISAF is providing the life and logistical support for the BMTF mentors. The cooperation between the civilian BMTF and the military and relationships between the border mentors and the Afghans are charting new territory and showing the way for successful approaches at other strategic borders.

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Monitoring Authorized Entry Points  
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¶10. (SBU) BMTF is managing maintenance for and training in the use of scanning and sensing equipment at the Kabul and Kandahar Airports and at numerous border crossings. Afghans are successfully using basic scanner equipment. Lack of Afghan capacity to use and maintain equipment, however, limits the value of deploying more advanced technology. Some technology, such as a sophisticated truck scanner installed at Sher Khan Bandir (bordering Tajikistan), requires up to \$350,000 for operation and maintenance. These types of scanners are difficult to adapt for use in the austere Afghan environment and have low potential for sustainability.

¶11. (SBU) The Kabul International Airport has been the scene of a patchwork of different international donor-funded activities. The BMTF is helping to build coherence through coordinated operations such as the recently executed bulk cash smuggling operation highlighted by Minister of Finance Zakhilwal and written-up by international media. The operation brought together five different agencies and project implementers in an investigation that revealed \$10 million in cash leaves Afghanistan daily. A new Airport Technical Working Group is making strides to bring all Afghan officials and international donors/mentors at the airport into one forum to coordinate operations better.

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Training the Afghan Border Police  
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¶12. (SBU) The Afghan Border Police (ABP) has responsibility to provide immigration and visa services, protect customs facilities, and prevent the entrance of unauthorized goods and persons at Afghanistan's 14 approved border crossing points. The ABP's jurisdiction includes all territory 50 km inland from Afghanistan's international borders. Previous Afghan National Security Forces training plans placed ABP near the bottom of the ANP training priority. As a result, the BMTF and CENTCOM developed a parallel complimentary training program to develop the ABP focusing on its distinctive functions.

¶13. (SBU) Four training and mentoring programs are in place near Shebregan (north), Spin Boldak (south), Jalalabad (east), and Herat (west). The current GIROA ABP staffing pattern calls for a 17,870 person force. Recent estimates show a shortfall of nearly 5,000 officers, non-commissioned officers and patrolmen. The new training centers are capable of training nearly 9,000 ABP a year for a basic six-week course. Problems with logistics, transportation, and attrition, however, will prevent the training pace from meeting the training need in a linear progression. Mentoring teams are at Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Helmand, and Nangahar Provinces. The short course provides basics in firearms, small unit tactics, vehicle management, law enforcement, and specialty weapons. The training centers will formally fall under the Combined Security Transition Command -Afghanistan (CSTC-A)/NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan

(NTM-A) in September 2010.

¶14. (SBU) COMMENT: While we have made considerable progress both in improving Afghan capabilities in border management and ensuring regular coordination between donors and with the GIROA, Afghanistan is starting from a very low threshold, and its needs remain great on all borders. One challenge we must begin to face is that as we help Afghanistan improve infrastructure and procedures on its side of the border, we will have to encourage Afghan officials to coordinate and communicate better with bordering countries, and in particular, Pakistan, to ensure a smooth, uninterrupted flow of licit goods and people.

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